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583 regarded as breaches of the established rules of society and treated accordingly.

585 It is difficult to summarize the rites and observances involved in a Hindu marriage, for they differ greatly from caste to caste, and from family to family. Here only a very general outline can be given.

The wedding takes place in the bride's house, on an auspicious day fixed by the two parties on the advice of the Brahmin priest. The bridegroom's party, consisting of relations and friends, leave their village in good time to arrive in the bride's village at least a day before the actual date of the marriage. On arrival they are received with great ceremony by the bride's people, and are lodged in a house kept vacant and clean for their use. In the courtesies that are exchanged it is necessary to make some special effort to keep the bridegroom's mother and sisters pleased for any dissatisfaction to them is likely to lead to trouble which may hold up further rites. While the bridegroom's party try to settle down in their house, the bride's people finalize the arrangements for the first dinner. When everything is ready word is sent to the bridegroom's party. After the dinner nothing remains to be done on that day. The guests return to their temporary abode; the hosts get busy to make everything ready for the rites of the next day.

[515] When the next day arrives the bride's mother and other female relations carry water and twigs to the groom's mother and other guests so that 'they may wash their mouths'. A little later breakfast

[776] is sent to them. The first major rite for the day is the worship of the bride's *kula-devata* or family god. In this both the bride and the bridegroom participate. The second major rite is known as *lagnam*, which must be performed at an auspicious hour determined by the Brahmin on the basis of his astrological calculations. The bride's party go in a procession to bring the guests to the marriage shed. At the appointed hour the *lagnam* is performed by chanting religious verses. The bridegroom ties a necklace of black beads round the bride's neck. This necklace symbolizes her married status, and she should not be without it unless she is widowed. He also puts rings on the second toes of her feet. Before the tying of *mangalsutra* (black beads) the two have to promise to stand by each other through all phases of life, for the mutual satisfaction of bodily, economic and spiritual needs. But the marriage is not yet complete. To put the seal of religious authority on it, the important

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rite of *seshahoman* must be performed. For this the bride and bridegroom are seated before a fire, sacred verses are read, and incense is burnt. This completes the marriage. Later the bride and bridegroom are seated facing each other for dinner. The ground around the wooden seats on which they sit is decorated with multicoloured designs. While eating the two are encouraged to throw a few morsels into each other's plates. Several minor rites follow. In one the newly-married couple are asked to address each other by using personal names. The bride has to show great reluctance in doing this, for a wife generally does not utter the name of her husband. She is given a doll, symbolizing a child, and is asked to entrust it to the care of 'its father' on the pretext that she has to cook or to do other household work. The next day, after a few minor rituals, the girl is 'given away' to her husband and his parents. This is done to the accompaniment of heart-rending and pathetic songs. The father asks her to regard the home of her father-in-law henceforward as her own home; and never to do anything—in thought, word or deed—that might bring discredit to her parents. He then begs the girl's father-in-law to treat her well, to ignore her faults, failings and shortcomings, and to teach her the ways of their family. The girl goes away with her husband. In her new home she has to go through a series of rites, worship of the family god and feasting. After three to seven days she returns to her parents for a brief stay.

Among all the castes the general tone of marriage ritual suggests the influences of Sanskritic rites, but the Brahmin does not officiate at the marriages of all castes. He is invited by the Komti, the agricultural castes, the Kummari, the Golla, the Sale and the Gaondla. The barber and the washerman invite the Brahmin if they can afford it, otherwise they manage with their own caste-priest. The Panch Bramha group has its own priests. The other groups occupying lower positions in the caste hierarchy invite a specialist from their own caste to officiate at the ceremony. Naturally recitation of sacred verses and marriage formulae from the scriptures is confined to ceremonies conducted by the Brahmin; in the other castes, while the pattern followed is essentially the same, the Sanskrit chants are absent. Other occupational castes whose co-operation is required in the ceremony are: the barber, the potter, the Madiga and the carpenter. The barber assists the parties during negotiations, carries their messages,

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585 distributes invitations, offers his occupational services in matters of haircutting and shaving, and at the wedding itself, at the time of important rites during the night, holds a lighted torch. The potter supplies the large quantity of earthenware needed for the different [533] rituals as well as for cooking. No marriage ceremony can be performed without the essential instrumental music played by the Madigas. The carpenter has to make the marriage-post, and other wooden fixtures as well, if they are required. The marriage rites require small payments to these occupational castes in the course of the ceremony itself. At the completion of the ceremony, depending on the means of the family, they are paid once again for their labours.

586 Divorce and widow re-marriage are allowed in all castes
587 except the Brahmin and the Komti. Divorce or 'driving away the wife' is not very common. In the 380 marriages studied by us there were only 79 cases of desertion and divorce. In all such cases the elders, the village council and the caste council intervene and the parties involved in the dispute have to abide by their decisions.
595 Brahmins do not conduct the re-marriage of widows. Polygyny is permitted among the Hindus; but it is rare. At the time of our investigation there were only seven polygynous Hindu homes in the village.

584 Among the Muslims the standard marriage ritual prescribed by Islam is adhered to with some regional and local variations. Marriage negotiations are initiated by the boy's people, and when they are successful a date for the *nikah* (rites of marriage) is fixed
585 by them in consultation with a Muslim marriage priest. Four days before the actual wedding preliminary rites are started. The ceremony opens with the rite of *manjah* in which the womenfolk of the two sides grind turmeric in their respective homes, and playfully throw turmeric and coloured water on each other in their separate groups. On the second day the groom's people go to the bride's home with gifts for her. These gifts include jewellery, clothes and bangles. The bride is then garlanded by a responsible person from the groom's side; and a little later, with her mother's permission, *missi* (a thick black paste) is applied to her lips and teeth. This symbolizes the actual beginning of the wedding rites. On the third morning, the bride's people (with the exception of her mother) go to the groom's place. They take presents for the bridegroom, and he is garlanded by a younger sister or cousin of

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the bride. The girl and the boy are seated opposite each other, 585
but are separated by a screen. The bride's sister or cousin asks the groom to extend his hand towards her so that she may apply *kenna* (a perfumed paste) to his index finger. He refuses to do this unless she promises to be his slave. When he does give her his finger, she catches hold of it, and lets go of it only when he promises to be her slave. Later turmeric paste is applied to the bride and she is attired in her bridal clothes. At the appointed time the groom is brought on a horse or in a decorated carriage by his people in a procession. The bridegroom finds the main entrance closed. It is opened by the bride's brothers when small gifts are offered to them. The *kazi*, Muslim priest, solemnizes the marriage by reading the prescribed words of *nikah*. The signature of the bridegroom is obtained on a document which embodies all the terms of the marriage contract, including the *mehar* (alimony) which he will have to pay if he leaves his wife. While this is being done the bride remains inside. Her father and some responsible elders then go to her and say, 'You are being married to X, with a *mehar* fixed at Rs. —. Are you willing to be his wife?' Her consent is necessary; although she often indicates it not by saying 'yes' but by crying. The bridegroom's mother puts a necklace of black beads around the bride's neck, and a nose-ring in her nose. Ceremonies of fun and frolic follow. The two are seated on a decorated bed, but a screen is held between them, and they throw rice at each other. Then the screen is removed and a mirror is placed between the two. The groom is asked to read some passages from the Koran and to see the reflection of his wife's face in the mirror. Later the bride is given away ceremonially by her parents to the head of the bridegroom's family. The procession for going home is formed by the groom's party, and the newly-married couple are taken in a decorated carriage. More rites follow at the bridegroom's house, where the two have to wash each other's feet. During all these days feasting goes on, to which friends and relations are invited. On the final day an elaborate feast is given. Later, in a day or two, the bride is taken back to her parents' home. There the bridegroom's people are received with great courtesy and are given an impressive feast.

Islam permits polygyny, and a man can have up to four wives. 595
In Shamirpet, however, there were only three polygynous Muslim 596
homes in a total Muslim population of 340, at the time of our

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595 investigations. Their social system and usage permit divorce, and
526 clauses pertaining to alimony are embodied in the written marriage contract. In actual practice, in all cases of desertion and 'running away' these conditions are not adhered to very strictly, and compensation when paid is substantially less than the figure mentioned
● 585 in the contract. As pointed out earlier the marriage rites are conducted by the *kazi*, who is invited from the city for this purpose.

41 *Death.* Both Hindus and Muslims understand the physiological causes of death. It is generally attributed to natural causes, such as disease or old age; but in all cases where the circumstances or manner of death are unusual it is attributed to supernatural factors, such as wrath of gods and ancestor-spirits, witchcraft and black magic.

764 Among all the Hindu castes, the dead children are buried. The Brahmin and the Komti as a rule cremate their dead, except in cases of death from snake-bite and smallpox. Among the other higher castes both cremation and burial are practised. It is usual to cremate the aged as well as the rich and the influential. In the lower castes such as the Sakali, the Mangali and the Erkala, as well as among the untouchable Malas and Madigas, burial is more common. Soon after a death, word is sent round to relations and friends in the village and also in the neighbouring villages. The corpse is washed, clothed and tied on to a wooden or bamboo bier. It is covered with a new cloth, and decorated with flowers. If the family can afford it Madigas are called to play their musical instruments, which they do walking at the head of the procession. The bier is carried by four people on their shoulders. As they proceed slowly towards the graveyard or the cremation ground, people keep on repeating some solemn slogans, such as 'the name of God alone is true' or 'be truthful and your salvation will be assured'. When a person is to be cremated, his or her son, or in the absence of a son a younger brother or some other near kin, carries an earthen pot with fire in it. Midway between the house and the burial ground the bier is placed on the earth for a few minutes' 'rest', and then carried on. Before putting it on the funeral pyre or in the grave, the son, or a near relation of the deceased, goes round the pyre (or grave) three times sprinkling water all around it. The body is then put on the pyre with the bier, or is taken from it and put in the grave. A near kinsman sets fire to the pyre, or

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husband by touching his feet. She washes the husband's clothes, and eats the leavings in his plate. The husband cannot do likewise. When the wife errs, the husband reprimands her, and can abuse and beat her. However, a good wife is not expected to answer him back. Even when the husband is wrong she is supposed to bear her lot meekly and submissively. This cultural pattern is reflected in the lament of the wife over her husband's demise, when she wails, 'Where is my lord? Where is my master? Now who will support me? The shield that protected me is gone; now I am helpless.'

This, then, is the 'ideal'. Almost everyone in the village would verbalize the expected husband-wife relationship in similar words. But the reality appears to be very different; and a close study of the actual family records would reveal that these ideals are more or less a social fiction. The husband is, without doubt, superior, and has, in most families, the upper hand; but practically nowhere do we find him a completely dominant, authoritarian and patriarchal figure. Moreover, the quality of inter-personal relations between husband and wife change as they leave one stage of life and enter another.

It has been pointed out earlier that married life is started by a couple under the parental roof. During this stage, at least for the first few months, they are not supposed to show any special concern for each other. The man continues to work under the direction of his father or elder brother; the woman carries out the instructions of her mother-in-law. There is hardly any opportunity for them to meet and talk during the day, and when they do meet under the cover of darkness, possibly in a separate room, the proximity of the parents' room does not allow them the liberty of engaging in audible love-play or even of talking freely. Of necessity they have to speak in whispers. The cultural pattern demands that the wife must resist the initial advances of her husband for several nights. She often feigns complete ignorance regarding sexual matters and displays horror and disgust when the husband approaches her. After two or three weeks the wife becomes more co-operative. Now sex dominates their life for the several months that follow. There is casual conversation between the two, but in these first months household affairs are invariably not discussed by them. The husband generally speaks to her about the village affairs and his kinsfolk. He also tells her his experiences of the city.